

A Strange but true Account of the Barbarous usage of three young Ladies in France for being Protestants.

With a Relation also of their VVonderfull Escape from thence into England.

THat the World may no longer doubt of the truth of those accounts which are daily given, by the poor distressed Protestants which Fly from *France*, of the cruelties under which they groan, nor pretend they are (at least) onely the meaner sort of People that suffer, to whom 'tis rather an advantage then otherwise, since they take that pretence to change a poor slavery in their own Country, to Live Rich and Free in ours. I have taken the Liberty to publish the following account; which being of undoubted Truth, may perhaps advantage those poor people, at least I am sure, can disoblige only some malicious Papists.

Hard by *Caen* in *Normandy*, Liv'd three Persons of Quallity, who besides considerable Estates, could justly boast off sharing the best Blood in that Province: They had every one a Son and a Daughter, who were no less Friends to each other, then their Fathers; so that the Young Ladies were seldom asunder, but joyntly imploy'd themselves in the pretty Exercises of their Sex, as their Brothers did in the more Robust ones of theirs.

They Liv'd in this agreeable Communication, when that great Monarch *Lewis* the XIV. began to put his Armies in a posture to Command the World. And it was then that these young Gallants impatient of sitting still, whilst there was so large a Field for them to shew their Gallantry in, beg'd and obtain'd leave of their good old Fathers, to goe and present themselves to his Majesty; that great Monarch receiv'd them with his usual affability, and gave them leave to make their first Apprentiship of War amongst the *Musquetaires* a *Cheval* of his Guard, and as such they made severall Campaignes, but just when his Majesty was about to reward their many brave actions with Commands fuitable to their Quallities, the ill fate of War took them off; they being Slain at the taking of a Town, as they fought each by other. The news of this accident prov'd mortal to their Indulgent Parents, so that the three Ladies saw themselves in an Instant without either Fathers or Brothers, but being of too tender an Age for Grief to make any deep Impression in, they outliv'd the loss, and in four or five years time being grown Marriageable,

there was nothing in the Province talk'd off but their Beauties ; They had as many pretenders as there were Young Noblemen in the Country, who could have any hopes to Charm these young Beauties, either with their Persons or Fortunes ; but they having in their Youth, by the means of an old Servant who attended them, suck'd in the Principles of the Protestant Religion, remain'd indifferent to them all : However an old Count who had been a great Friend of their Fathers, and who had a vast Estate, wrought so upon their Guardians, that one of them was Sacrific'd to him, and the other two not enduring to be parted from so dear a Friend, bore her Company to his Castle, whither after the consummation of the Marriage he carried his new Spouse.

Never did Age and Youth agree so well for the first Year, as those two did, for the humour'd him in all things, and he doated on her extreemly ; But his Chaplain being a Jesuit, having at last found out that these three Ladies dispis'd his Idolatrous Principles (according to the Bloody Maxims of that Society) set himself to disturb this happy Quiet, and laying hold of every opportunity which his Function gave him of being alone with the old Man, fill'd his Head with suspicions to that degree, by sometimes putting him in mind of his own Age and her Youth, and then again hinting her Heresie (as he call'd it) that from Loving her less than ordinary, he came at last almost to hate her ; Yet pretending that Jealousie was his only Disease, he gave for some time no further proofs of his hatred than to confine her with the other two Ladies to her Chamber ; But this not being what the Jesuit aim'd at, (who resolv'd to have them either of his Superstition, or else to make them Martyr's) they did not long continue thus, but had further proofs of his cruelties ; for in two Months time their Lodging was chang'd, and they now put in the lower Room of the Castle, where the Jesuit was their Goaler, and Bread and Water their Food. In this miserable condition they lay for some time, being daily haunted, by their barbarous Keeper, who spar'd for neither threats nor arguments to make them Renounce their Religion, and goe into a Monastery, (this being their Guardians designe to get their Estates) but they still courageously resisted all his assaults, and with a patience incredible bore their afflictions ; till good Fortune presented them with an occasion of escaping from them. Which was thus ; That old Gentlewoman whose Instructions had brought them over to the Protestant Religion, dying, left behind her a Son, who waited upon the above-mentioned Jesuite, and he being admitted to carry them their poor allowance, they so wrought on him, that he carried them a Letter to a Young Gentleman, who had embrac'd the same believe with them, wherein they display'd their miserable Condition, and beg'd his assistance to deliver them from their misfortunes ; he had no sooner receiv'd this message, but preparing a Boat and a Ladder of Ropes fastened with the Boy to the Castle, and approaching the lower Room which was their Prison, which had a Window looking toward the Ditch, he found means to enter, and without being discovered by any in the Castle, helped them out by the same way, and then hastened to the Sea side, where they happily Embarqued, and came for England.

They who doubt the Truth of this Relation, may be satisfied by seeing the Original Letters relating to it, with very good Certificates, at the Grecian's Coffee-House near Covent-Garden.